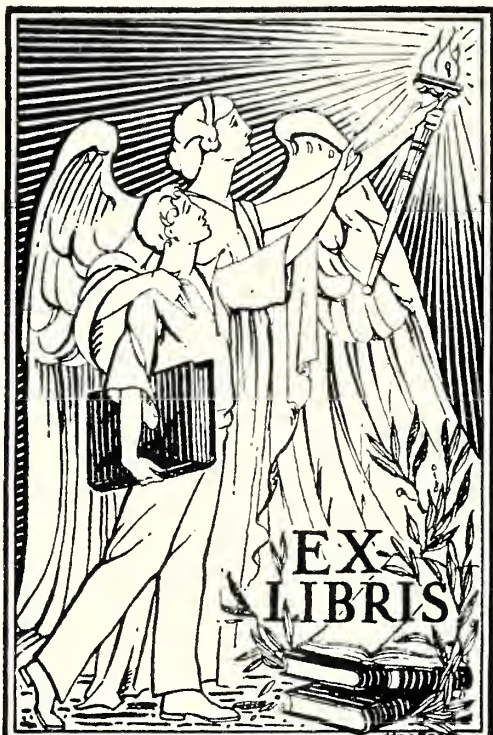


OUT OF DARKNESS -- INTO  
THE LIGHT

J. Marshall Parham

HV 1795

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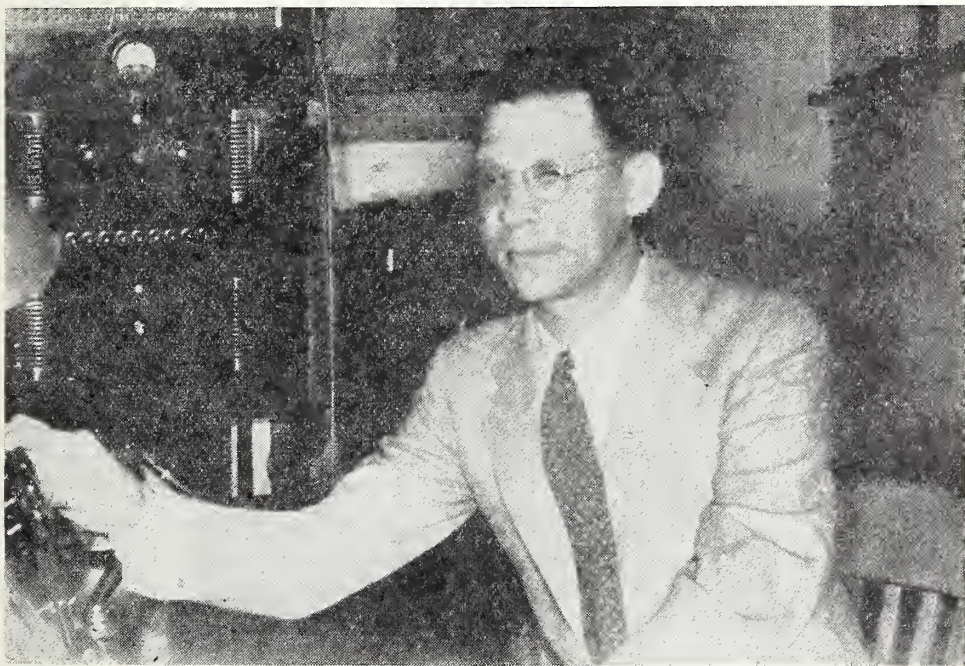
## Out of Darkness — Into the Light

J. MARSHALL PARHAM

HV 1795  
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"No one will ever realize what the North Carolina Commission for the Blind has done for me." Russell X paused for a moment to adjust his glasses. "I was lost in a thick, black fog and was crazy with fear that my wife and baby would be hungry, now

the call of an interested friend to visit Mr. X, who had been plunged precipitously into a new world of blindness. Only a short time before, he had been employed as an engineer for one of the South's leading radio stations. Like many of us, he had post-



*Back at his old job as a radio engineer.*

that I had lost my job because of blindness. You people found me just in time. I had become desperate, and anything might have happened."

A rehabilitation counselor of the Commission for the Blind responded to

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Mr. Parham is a Rehabilitation counselor with the North Carolina State Commission for the Blind. Before he lost his vision he was a student of Journalism at the University of North Carolina. His own tragic experience is reflected in the vivid telling of this story of the Rehabilitation client.

poned preparations for a rainy day so that when blindness suddenly overtook him, he was stunned. He had no way of paying for immediate medical care and no way of providing for his family. His sensitive bewilderment resulting from blindness had developed into hopeless frustration, and he was groping for a way out.

The Commission for the Blind ar-

ranged for a medical examination by an ophthalmologist who found that, after some treatment, hope for any restoration of sight was scant — very, very scant. The eye specialist recommended other examinations by other specialists . . . and there came a final answer that the eye condition was so complicated that no promise could be made regarding definite gains in his ability to see again.

Now Mr. X found new levels of despair. He spent much of his time near the window and the lights in his room, trying to catch a clear view of light, and to assure himself that he would see again. The Commission for the Blind began initial plans for adjusting him to his blindness, while still pursuing one last effort to restore his sight. One of the North Carolina specialists recommended that he be examined at the Wilmer Institute, Johns-Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland. Days and weeks began to crystalize into one dreadful eternity for Mr. X, who had now begun remaining in bed longer each day. He exhibited less and less interest in things close about him. This was accompanied by a loss of appetite, with resulting loss of weight. The impact of the situation was felt so keenly by his family that they were almost as a sounding board, echoing and re-echoing his despair.

At long last the day came. Mr. X was seen by the specialists at the Wilmer Institute. They found that he had an operable eye and that some sight might be restored with the skill and care of an outstanding eye specialist at the Institute. It was felt that there would be some chance to restore enough sight so that Mr. X could travel about alone. However, hope of recovering useful sight so that he could see well enough to read and carry on as before

was not promised. The family was enlisted by the Agency representative to assist with a plan for the training and employment of Mr. X, should he not recover useful sight. These plans were carefully made so that as soon as he was dismissed from the Wilmer Institute he would find a definite future of economic security for himself and his family, all evolving from an employment situation in which he was to play the star role.

But when the eye specialist fitted glasses for Mr. X after his successful operations it was found that he could see so well that he could read print as before. He would be physically able to return to his former employment as one of the engineers for a leading radio station in the South.

And now Mr. X spends a great deal of time philosophizing. "Gratitude", said Mr. X, "is one of those intangibles that seems to become even more intangible if you try to dress it up with words."

## The Pledge

- I WILL *achieve happiness and success;*
- I WILL *be considerate, love and help others.*
- I WILL *continue to work with my mind and body;*
- I WILL *seek and use the latent powers in myself and above;*
- I WILL *practice faith in myself, my fellow beings, and God;*
- I WILL *put into action plans to reach a definite goal;*
- I WILL *ignore frustration and adversity by repeated endeavor.*

—REYNOLD M. BURT

Mr. Burt contributed "The Pledge" to the *Journal* with the following note:

"I circulate in a wheel chair although years ago doctors said I could not live. I WILL-ed otherwise."

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